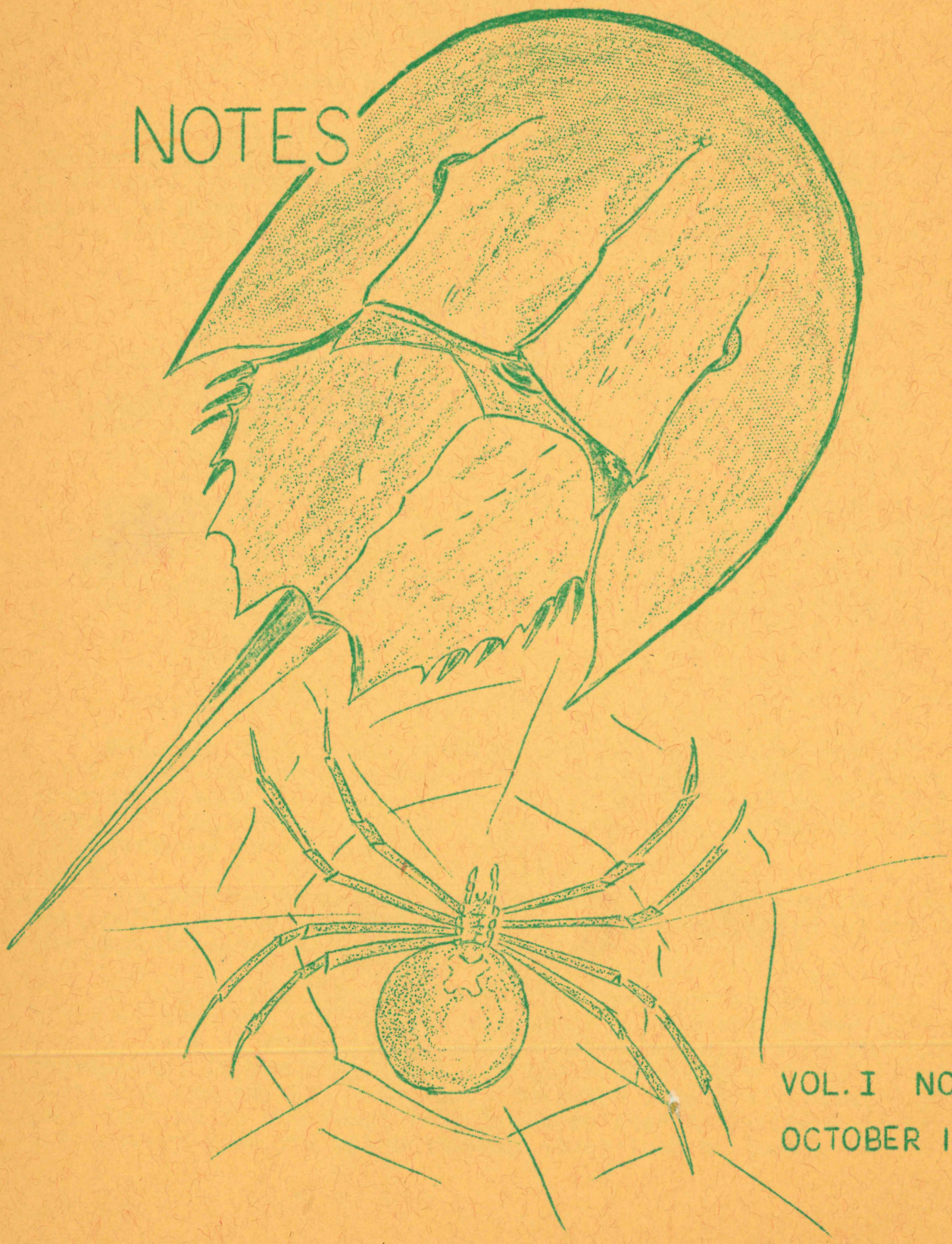
NATURE NOTES



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"NATURE NOTES"

is published by

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622 Williams Street, New London, Connecticut

Director & Editor : Roy A. Kennan

It is the purpose of this monthly publication, sent free of charge to all members of The Thames Science Center, to report on activities at the Center, both in the month just past and in the months to come, to welcome new members to the organization, and to offer informational articles in the field of Natural Science.

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BIRD SEED FOR SALE

The time is fast approaching when the natural sources of seed for many of our birds will be either depleted for the season or covered by snow ... and therefore the time has come to think of providing a supplement to their sparse Winter diet by means of feeders and scattered seed.

The Science Center is offering mixed seed and sunflower seed at reasonable prices this Fall, thanks to the cooperative effort with the Pequot-sepos Wildlife Sanctuary.

If any of you are all ready accustomed to buying seed for the birds we hope you will consider buying it from the Center this year ; it will help us financially, and we think you will find the price reasonable. If you have never fed the birds before we hope you'll buy some seed and try it. Many birds that are relatively hard to get a good look at in the woods will learn to come to a window ledge feeder and thereby give you a wonderfully close look at them...

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER
October 1964

Hello There!

October has been a busy month for us, what with the process of adjusting to a new profession, trying to put things into some semblance of order, and going to a conference.

The conference was sponsored by the Natural Science for Youth Foundation and was held at several museums and nature centers in Southwestern Conn. from October 13th to 16th. By attending this I picked up many ideas that I hope to be able to incorporate into the operation of the Science Center.

While at the conference I learned that Dr. C.M. Goethe, who has been sending gifts to the New London County Children's Museum for years, was to receive the 1963 Wm. T. Hornaday medal for his outstanding contribution to the youth museum - natural science education movement. Dr. Goethe is 90 years old and lives in California, yet he sends gifts, such as the ancient Iranian bronze arrowhead we received from him in October, all over the country to help small youth centers and museums have more varied exhibits than their budget would allow otherwise.

Our Fall classes are now more than half over and although we had to cancel the 7th & 8th grade class for lack of registrations, the other two classes have been going along very well. I hope that by the time we have a Spring session of classes we will have some more interested members to join them...

The Junior Bird Migration Trips were also very successful for those that attended them...but most of the attendance was from the Pequot-sepos group. I hope that we do better on our Saturday A.M. trips that are scheduled for November 14th and 21st! Also let's turn out for the Nov. 8th Family Field Trip to Harkness Park; it will incorporate both bird-watching and seashore biology...

Our Christmas Bazaar, which will be the fourth one held by the Thames Science Center, will be held from 10 A.M. to 2 P.M. on the 28th ov November. It is our main fund-raising effort for the year, and can be a big success...IF...we all get together and help! I'm looking forward to a lot of phone calls offering donations for the tables and help in making things. If you have any handicraft ideas please call soon so that we can get started on them...the 28th is just around the corner!

Office hours at the Center are from 10 A.M. to Noon, Tuesday to Friday...if you have any problems or ideas please either visit us or give us a call....

Roy A. Kennan

THE 4th ANNUAL CHRISTMAS BAZAAR

WILL BE HELD

AT THE SCIENCE CENTER

ON NOVEMBER 28 , 1964

FROM 10 A.M. TO 2 P.M.

WE NEED HELP

DONATIONS OF :

- NEEDLEWORK
- BAKED GOODS
- NOVELTIES
- HANDICRAFTS
- PRESERVES
- WHITE ELEPHANTS

ETC.

VOLUNTEERS TO :

- HELP DECORATE
- SELL THINGS
- MAKE POSTERS
- SPREAD THE WORD

ETC.

IF YOU CAN HELP

PLEASE CALL THE THAMES SCIENCE CENTER 443-4295

Tues. thru Frid. 10 A.M. - 6 P.M.
Sat. and Sunday 1 P.M. - 6 P.M.

Pequot-sepos Wildlife Sanctuary Trailside Lecture

November 18, 1964

POLLUTION - PESTICIDES - PARKS AND POLITICS by Alfred L. Hawkes

The author of this provocative title is the Executive Director of the Audubon Society of Rhode Island. Since graduation from the University of Massachusetts in 1951, Mr. Hawkes has been constantly involved in the areas of natural history and conservation. Space does not permit us to do justice to his varied and interesting background, but a few of his present activities are: Editor of "Narragansett Naturalist" and "Rhode Island Conservation Newsletter"; Chairman, Green Acres Advisory Council for Rhode Island; Corresponding Secretary of R. I. Wildlife Federation; member of R. I. Task Force on Conservation.

This lecture, and the four others scheduled for the remaining part of the season, will be offered admission-free to members of the Thames Science Center. This is being done in consideration of the trial merger with the Pequot-sepos Wildlife Sanctuary.

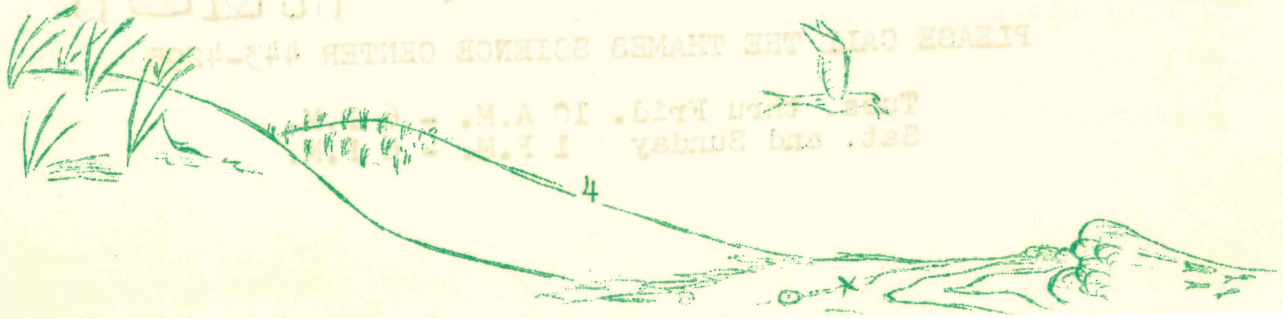
BOOK REVIEW

LIFE IN THE SHIFTING DUNES by Laurence B. White, Jr.
Illustrated by Henry B. Kane

This book, a publication of the Museum of Science in Boston, Mass., is a popularly-written guide to the natural history of Castle Neck, Ipswich, Mass.....and it is far more than just that. Mr. White has managed to sandwich into an 85-page softbound booklet facts on geology, ecology, botany, marine biology, mammalogy, entomology, and ornithology, as they pertain to his particular area, and also so that they can be used by any beachwalker in the Northeast States. Although a specialist in any one of the fields covered might want to see a more complete list of his favorite subjects, all get covered well enough to make good reading, and one is not apt to see all of the species mentioned on any one trip to the beach.

The bibliography of 32 titles, each after the appropriate chapter, would make a fine nature library, and encompasses books ranging in price from 35¢ to $10.00. Another good feature of this work is the inclusion of checklists, faced by blank pages for note-taking, at the end of the book. This enables the field-tripper to have both his book and his field notes in one piece.

The price of the book is $1.95, and it may be obtained through the Science Center store. A small supply is already on order.



ACTIVITIES CALENDAR - NOVEMBER 1964

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30					

ACTIVITIES

CLASSES

Nov. 6th and 13th - "Winter is Coming", the last two sessions of Mrs. Kashanski's course for 2nd Graders.

Nov. 4th, 11th and 18th - "Adaptations", the last three sessions of Mr. Kennan's course for 4th, 5th and 6th Graders.

FIELD TRIPS

Nov. 8th - the second PSWS-TSC Family Field Trip. We'll meet at the Center at 9:30 A.M. and go to Harkness Park for a combined bird-watching and seashore biology trip. This trip will be postponed if the weather is bad.

Nov. 14th and 21st - these Saturday Morning field trips will meet at the Center at 8:30 A.M. The first will be a seashore biology trip open to all TSC members, no age limit. The locale of the second trip will be announced at the time of the first trip.

LECTURES

Nov. 18th - the second PSWS Trailside Lecture of the season will be at 8 P.M. at the PSWS Sanctuary Building. (See page 4 of Nature Notes for details)

MOVIES

Nov. 21st - TSC will hold a Saturday afternoon Movie at 4 P.M. upstairs in the Center building. The title and admission prices for this program will be announced on the bulletin board at the Center and in the New London Day the week preceeding the show...

BAZAAR

Nov. 28th - the fourth annual Christmas Bazaar will be held from 10 A.M. to 2 P.M. (See page 3 for important details)

- CONTEST -

During the month of November we are going to hold a What-Is-It? contest. The object of this will be to find out how many members use the What-Is-It? box, and how many are fooled by it.

The contest will be held at three levels, with one prize given at the end of the month in each category. Categories are as follows:

1. Kindergarten to 2nd Grade
2. 3rd Grade to 6th Grade
3. Over 6th Grade

There will be three What-Is-It? boxes, labelled as to the ages that can use them for the contest. No answers will be given on the front of the boxes, but they will be posted on the bulletin board after the contents have been changed.

The What-Is-Its will be changed every three days, making a total of eight chances in each category. If more than one person in a category gets all of the answers correct, there will be a run-off for the tie, held at the Center on a date that will be announced on the bulletin board.

- NEEDS -

The Science Center, like many other small interpretive museums, is run on a small budget, and therefore is not always able to have the right equipment for the right job on hand. From time to time we will publish in Nature Notes a few of the pieces of equipment that the Center is lacking. This is not merely done so that we can have more for US...it's more for YOU that we're interested in.

The recent Junior Bird Migration field trips brought out one glaring lack of equipment at the Center...BINOCULARS. If any of you have an old pair that is still serviceable, or have the financial means of making us a gift to be used for buying a pair, the Center needs at least one pair, and preferably several, so that bird walks can be enjoyed by all. It is rather frustrating to stand by and hear those who are fortunate enough to have glasses talking about the field marks on a bird that you can just barely see!

Another glaring need at the Center is one that money cannot buy...VOLUNTEERS. There are a few teenage boys who come in regularly to help out, but they can only do so much...it would be very gratifying to have a few adults who can spare an hour or two during the week come forth and help. The jobs that need doing are not all very glamorous, but they are all important if the Center is to do its job. If you think you might be able to help, please call us at the Center between 10 A.M. and 6 P.M., Tuesday through Friday, and from 1 P.M. to 6 P. M. on Saturday and Sunday. The phone number is 443-4295.

NATURE NOTE - OCTOBER 1964

THE HORSESHOE CRAB
Limulus polyphemus

This weird-looking "crab" is probably known to almost anyone who has been to an Atlantic Coast beach during the summer, but I wonder how many of you realise some of the strange and wonderful things that are known about him ?

To start off with...he is NOT a crab! This fellow with two common names, Horseshoe Crab and King Crab, both containing the word "crab", is actually a member of the Class Arachnoidea, which contains the spiders, scorpions and mites...but not the crabs! (This also explains the strange-seeming combination on this month's cover.)

One thing we don't have to worry about is any confusion when we look for Limulus in the field ; there isn't anything that even faintly resembles him to be found in the living world. Whether the Horseshoe Crab you find is one inch long and tan or twenty inches long and almost black, you can be sure he is Limulus. He is also a very old species, in that he has undergone very little change during the last several million years, being descended from an extinct group called the Eurypterids which flourished some 400 million years ago.

As for economic importance, the King Crab has been accused of being one of the cheif predators of clams, especially the Softshell Clam, Mya arenaria. So far as I have been able to find, no one has ever proved this to be true. Limulus may well eat small Clams, but so do a lot of other animals, such as Herring Gulls, Clam Worms...and Man! Much of the blame given to this "crab" is because of his habit of plowing through the mud and sand in shallow water seeking the various small animals it does eat. The result of several dozen Horseshoe Crabs working over a small beach looks as if a bulldozer had been at work. However, a couple of tides soon restores the usual order of things when the Limulus have gone.

Another interesting facet of this animal's life is the fact that although many adults are seen on our beaches during the summer, very few if any small Horseshoe Crabs are ever seen on the shore. Their cast-off shells are in evidence as the season goes on, but never the live animal. They migrate, for reasons known best to themselves, to deep water not long after they are hatched and don't return to the shore until they are several inches long.

Many children at the beach are afraid of the Horseshoe Crab, thinking that he is either poisonous or just plain ferocious. Of course he is nothing of the sort and the only possible danger is that of stepping on his long, stiff telson, or tail. This long spine is usually trailed along behind him, but it is faintly possible that someone might step on one, and if they did it could go right through their foot...but through no fault of the Horseshoe Crab.

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